

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 AID-05 OES-07 VO-05
CA-01 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 DODE-00 PA-01
USIA-06 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 /091 W
-----080164 220724Z /23

R 220540Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2004
INS WASHDC
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 8553

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF TH LA
SUBJECT: OVERVIEW OF HMONG INFLUX INTO NONG KHAI

FOL MSG RECD ACTION BANGKOK INFO VIENTIANE DTD 190500Z MAR 78
AND BEING REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO:

C O N F I D E N T I A L UDORN 0072

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF TH LA
SUBJECT: OVERVIEW OF HMONG INFLUX INTO NONG KHAI
PROVINCE

REF: UDORN 071 AND PREVIOUS

1. DURING PAST TEN DAYS, CONREPS HAVE INTERVIEWED
HALF-A-DOZEN LEADERS OF HMONG REFUGEES GROUPS THAT
HAVE FLED INTO NONG KHAI PROVINCE. FROM THESE ACCOUNTS,
AND INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM OFFICIAL THAI SOURCES,
THERE EMERGES FOLLOWING GENERAL PICTURE OF EVENTS
SURROUNDING HMONG EXODUS FROM PHU BIA AREA AND THEIR ENTRY
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INTO THAILAND.

2. HMONG REFUGEE LEADERS STATE THAT LARGE SCALE LPDR/SRV
MILITARY OPERATION THAT PROMPTED THEIR EXODUS BEGAN
FEBRUARY 10 AND WAS DIRECTED AGAINST 10-12 HMONG VILLAGES
IN PHU BIA AREA, SOUTHWEST OF PLAIN OF JARS, CONTAINING
POPULATION OF AN ESTIMATED 50,000- 0,000. THEY CLAIM

THAT LPDR/SRV ASSAULT FORCE WAS SUPPORTED BY R4 PT-76
TANKS, FOUR ARMORED SCOUT CARS, TWO L-19 OBSERVATION
AIRCRAFT AND SEVERAL BATTERIES OF 105 MM HOWITZERS. FOUR

DAYS AFTER LPDR/SRV ATTACKS BEGAN, TWO THIRDS OF HMONG
VILLAGERS HAD FALLEN, LARGELY THROUGH LONGE RANGE SHELLING.
WHEN LPDR/SRV TROOPS ENTERED VILLAGES, THEY REPORTEDLY
PUT HOUSES, FOOD CACHES AND RICE FIELDS TO TORCH.

3. HMONG LEADERS FROM INITIAL GROUP OF VILLAGES THAT FELL
TO LPDR/SRV TROOPS INDICATE THAT POPULATION BEGAN
ABANDONING VILLAGES WHEN SHELLING BEGAN AND SUFFERED ONLY
SLIGHT CASULTIES. ONE HMONG LEADER ESTIMATES TOTAL OF
50 HMONG KIA AND WIA IN FOUR VILLAGES IN HIS AREA.
ANOTHER LEADER SAYS THAT HE WITNESSED ONLY TWO MEN KILLED
IN HIS VILLAGE AND STILL ANOTHER STATES THAT THERE WERE
FIVE WIA IN HIS VILLAGE, WHO UNFORTUNATELY
HAD TO BE LEFT BEHIND. LPDR AND SRV CASUALTIES WERE UNKNOWN.

4. HMONG LEADERS SAY THAT A LARGE PERCENTAGE, PERHAPS
MAJORITY, OF PHU BIA POPULATION, UNDER LEADERSHIP OF
SHAI SHOUU YANG, ARE REMAINING IN GENERAL AREA ALTHOUGH
THEY HAVE RETREATED TO MORE INACCESSIBLE LOCATIONS. THEY
PLAN TO RESIST OR SUCCESSFULLY AVOID FURTHER
LPDR/SRV OPERATIONS BUT ARE SEVERELY HANDICAPPED BY LACK
OF FOOD, WEAPONS AND OTHER SUPPLIES.
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5. THERE ARE CONFLICTING ASSESSMENTS OF NUMBER OF HMONGS
WHO HAVE ALTOGETHER ABANDONED PHU BIA AND ARE
HEADED FOR THAILAND TO SEEK ASYLUM. ALLOWING FOR INEVITABLE
EXAGGERATION ENCOUNTERED IN REFUGEE REPORTS,
A FIGURE OF 1000-3000 SUCH HMONGS APPEARS TO BE REASONABLE
ESTIMATE AT PRESENT TIME. HOWEVER, HMONG LEADERS
EXPECT MUCH LARGER NUMBERS IN FUTURE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 8553

6. TREK OF HMONG REFUGEES FROM PHU BIA TO MEKONG RIVER AREA OPPOSITE PHON PHISAI AND BUNG KAN DISTRICTS, NONG KHAI PROVINCE, AVERAGES 10-15 PER DAY DEPENDING ON SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF HMONG GROUP. FEW CONTACTS ALONG WAY WITH LPDR OR SRV PATROLS ARE REPORTED; THEY PRODUCE AVERAGE HMONG CASUALTIES OF 2-5 PERSONS PER GROUP.

7. FOLLOWING ARRIVAL AT MEKONG RIVER, HMONG LEADERS REPORT THEY HAVE SPENT AS LONG AS TWO TO THREE WEEKS HIDING IN NEARBY FOOTHILLS LOOKING FOR SAFE PLACE AND TIME TO CROSS RIVER. THUS FAR, NONGS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTING THEIR RIVER CROSSINGS AT FIVE MAIN POINTS SPREAD OVER A THIRTY KILOMETER AREA RANGING FROM NA KANG VILLAGE, COORDINATES UF 187348, PHON PHISAI DISTRICT, EAST TO A HONG VILLAGE, UF 381371, BUNG KAN DISTRICT.

8. HMONG LEADERS STATE THAT WAITING PERIOD NEAR BORDER AND ACTUAL CROSSING OF MEKONG RIVER IS WHEN THEY HAVE SUFFERED MOST OF THEIR CASUALTIES. SUCH CASUALTIES ARE HIGH AS IN CASE OF TWO GROUPS THAT CROSSED RIVER MARCH 15
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WHO CLAIM LOSING NINE OF ELEVEN MEMBERS AND SIX OF TWENTY MEMBERS RESPECTIVELY TO LPDR GUNFIRE AND DROWNING. HOWEVER, OTHER GROUPS SOME NUMBERING AS LARGE AS SEVENTY, MAKE BORDER APPROACH AND CROSS RIVER UNSCATHED. THERE IS A VERY LARGE NUMBER OF WOMEN AND SMALL CHILDREN AMONG HMONGS WHO DO MAKE IT TO THAILAND WHICH SUGGESTS THEIR MENFOLK MAY BE COMING LATER.

9. THERE APPEAR TO BE SEVERAL REASONS WHY THIS CURRENT GROUP OF HMONG IS ENTERING THAILAND AT NONG KHAI PROVINCE. FIRST, LINE OF MOUNTAIN RIDGES THAT STRETCHES FROM PHU BIA AREA ARE UNBROKEN DOWN TO

EDGE OF MEKONG OPPOSITE PHON PHISAI AND BUNG KAN DISTRICTS OFFERS ESCAPING HMONG GOODCOVER. SECOND, SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF NEW ARRIVALS HAVE RELATIVES AT NONG KHAI CAMP. FINALLY, THERE IS EVIDENCE SUGGESTING THAT SOME OF HMONG LEADERS HAVE HAD PREVIOUS CONTACTS WITH OFFICIALS IN PHON PHISAI AND BUNG KAN DISTRICTS. (WE WILL REPORT MORE ON THIS IN SEPTTEL.)

10. COMMENT: CONSULATE IS MAINTAINING CLOSE, INFORMAL CONTACT WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS AT PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT LEVEL. REGARDING PRESENT HMONG INFLUX . WE ALSO CONSULT ON ALMOST DAILY BASIS WITH UNHCR, CAMA SERVICES, IRC AND REFUGEE CAMP OFFICIALS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR SITUATION IN THIS FASHION AND REPORT ON SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS AS THEY OCCUR.
FINNEY UNQUOTE
WHITEHOUSE

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